

The Lady (Voter) and the (Tammany) Tiger

Acting Mayor Smith and Senator Wagner
Consider the New State of Affairs That
Suffrage Brings in Political Clubhouses



ACTING MAYOR ALFRED E. SMITH

By ELEANOR BOOTH SIMMONS.

THE Lady and the Tiger? That's the problem to-day, at least it's the problem with Al Smith and Tom Smith and Tom Foley and Dan Finn and Dan Riordan and—oh, a lot of politicians around New York city. All the Tammany leaders, in fact.

There is another problem, too, but it's in a different part of the political zoo, over in the elephant pen. But the Lady and the Elephant doesn't loom so large a question mark as the Lady and the Tiger, on account of G. O. P.'s being less thick than Democrats in these parts.

November 6 is some time back, but Tammany is still rubbing its head and sort of floundering around, so to speak. The person who had to settle the conundrum of "The Lady or the Tiger?" had nothing on Tammany, nothing at all. Ask Senator Wagner if that isn't so.

As to the Clubhouses.

The Tiger has swallowed the lady voter. The Elephant has swallowed the lady voter. Everything in the political zoo has swallowed the lady voter, in New York State, and all are smiling regular Cheshire cat smiles over the meal. But having swallowed her, how is the Tiger, for example, going to assimilate her? Not merely at the polls, but socially?

There are the district clubhouses, now. The lady voter has a hunch that considerable politics goes on in those clubhouses, and the Tiger has a hunch that she has that hunch—and there you are. Oh, Senator Wagner and acting Mayor Smith and the rest of them have not forgotten the Bluebeard story that they read back in their innocent childhood days. They are not even going to try to keep the lady voter out of the clubhouses, and they insist that they want her in them. But there are difficulties.

As a matter of fact they do want the women in the clubhouses, because they want the woman vote, and well they know that a wandering woman vote left to itself and not properly shepherded is liable to be gathered in by some irregular fusion or reform candidate or goodness knows what. They want the women in on the social side of politics, but the question is, how are the clubhouses going to assimilate women along with certain institutions which are almost sacred, such as sitting in at a little poker game, and so on?

Not an Exaggeration.

If those institutions are swept away, cigar stumps and cards and all that, will the fellows of the district continue to come around? If they are retained, will the women come around? In the fevered minds of some of the braves around the Wigwam it looks like a vote losing proposition anyway, no matter which side of the penny they turn up.

Of course we women know that they are exaggerating the problem. It's funny how they don't appear to know women, though they've been associating with them all their lives. Funny how, now that woman has the vote, she suddenly looms before them some strange unplumbed creature, and they get together in back rooms of clubhouses and wonder helplessly what their old familiar companions are

going to do to the political game which they had going so nicely.

Senator Wagner, now, he probably has women in his family, always has. He's been quite chummy with the suffs for some time. One would not have thought that woman was an unknown quantity to Senator Wagner.

But in confidential moments Senator Wagner frankly admits that he is all fussed up about this business of woman in politics. Not in the larger sense, of course, but how is she going to affect the clubs and the fine work they do keeping the organization?

The Little Poker Games.

"There are things in the district clubs—well, spittoons, you know—the boys have to have them around. We've been used to being free and easy. Having a little poker game and smoking and so on. The ladies wouldn't like that," he explained anxiously to a particular lady from whom he was seeking light.

Plainly he was all balled up.

"Couldn't we have ladies' nights at the clubs?" he asked. "Sweep all the spittoons and so on out of sight one or two nights in the week, and just turn the clubhouse over to the ladies? Let them have a little social organization of their own with the right to use the rooms, or the house, or whatever the district organization meets in?"

The lady of whom he was seeking light thought not.

"Our sex has been doing the ladies' aid act so long," she explained. "We are tired of it. That is why we worked for the vote and got it. We mean to be in on the ground floor right side by side with you men."

The ladies' aid illustration appealed to the Senator. Come to think of it, he'd heard that often from the suffs.

"I've been a suffragist a long time," he said.

"Yes, about a year," agreed the lady.

"Oh, much longer," said Senator Wagner. "I saw this thing coming. It's the right thing. I'm glad women have the vote. We welcome them into the Democratic organization. We are making arrangements for them to be on the county committee. But there are practical difficulties. You think they wouldn't be satisfied with their own separate nights at the clubhouses?"

How About Ladies' Nights?

"It might start that way, but don't you think the men would come on ladies' nights? Men would find their curiosity leading them to the club on women's nights and women would be curious to come on men's nights, and before you knew it the attendance would be so mixed you couldn't tell which were men's nights and which were women's nights. So it would work out all right and you don't need to worry."

Senator Wagner, however, continued to look worried. Probably he had some recollection in the back of his brain of how mother objected to the smell of tobacco smoke in her curtains or how some feminine friend warned him against cards. It's a pity he doesn't know Miss Adeline Stirling.

Miss Stirling is the corresponding secretary of the New York City Woman Suffrage Party, and to look at her she is the very incarnation of propriety, sweet, calm, respectable, every inch of her. But one day some time before the 1917 election she was speaking before the Mohawk Club, a Democratic organization.

"I'm a Tammany Democrat," she told them. (Big Boss Mary Garrett Hay of the City Suff party wasn't there, or she wouldn't have dared make such a partisan statement). "I'm a Tammany Democrat and I'd like to be a member of your club."

After the meeting a delegation came to Miss Stirling's side.

"Is that right about your being a Tammany Democrat?" they asked. She said it was. "Then," said the delegation, "when election day's over and you are a voter we'll be happy to put you up for membership. We play a good deal of poker, but you wouldn't have to come poker nights."

"Not come poker nights!" exclaimed Miss Stirling. "But if there's one thing I'm proud of it's my ability to sit in at a poker game and come out on top."

The Mohawk Club after recovering from its surprise agreed that the corresponding secretary of the New York City Woman Suffrage Party would be an acquisition, and soon after election an invitation to join arrived. But unfortunately that redistricting business shunted her out of the Mohawk Club district, so to her disappointment she couldn't belong. She's looking up clubs in the district where the politicians have put her. She is a voter in the special election on March 5, by the way, up in the Twenty-first Congressional.

Anybody who thinks that women can't be good fellows should have watched the disbanding of the suffrage parade that cold, cold October day in 1915. They reached Fifty-ninth street and Fifth avenue blue from the bitter winds. Any sensible man knows what to do under those circumstances—how to ward off pneumonia.

Does he fancy woman doesn't know quite as well. If so he should have seen the fashionable hotels around there just then. Shoals of suffs with their banners stacked up in corners while they leaned over the sparkling—well, it was all perfectly nice and temperate, but it was evident that women know what is what and that men needn't fear all the light and joy will depart from political clubs when the new voters enter in.

What Al Smith Thinks.

Alfred E. Smith, president of the Board of Aldermen, now acting Mayor, is one Tammany man who is taking the situation calmly. At least he won't admit that he is worried.

"It will shake down all right," he told me the other day when I sought him in his office at the City Hall. "Time settles these things. The Democratic organization, which isn't Tammany, you understand—Tammany is simply a political club which has owned the Wigwam on Fourteenth street for many years, and the Democratic County Committee meets there, that's all—the Democratic organization is settling the matter of how women shall be taken into the political work and so on, but whether the women shall meet at the district clubs with the men or on separate nights is a local matter. Each club will fix that for itself."

"Of course, in some clubs there are physical difficulties—cramped for room and no conveniences for the women. Take Finn's club over at 221 Hudson street, the western half of the First Assembly district. He's only got one room over there. It's been all right for the boys to meet in, but I told him, 'Daniel,' I said, 'you've got to fix things so you can have the women there.'"

"Got to get the women's vote," explained the acting Mayor, with a twinkle at me.

Mr. Smith was not for suffrage—he admits that frankly. I committed a dreadful faux pas when I went in by mixing him up with Congressman Thomas F. Smith, who is secretary of Tammany Hall and a suff.

"Oh, Mr. Smith," I chirped, "the last time I saw you you were congratulating Miss Mary Garrett Hay on the passage of the suffrage amendment through the House—it had just passed, and you came up in the gallery to tell her how glad you were—"

Women Well Treated.

Well, how could one remember which Mr. Democratic Smith it was? No one remembers what happened those wild and joyous moments just after the amendment was voted in. The acting Mayor didn't seem to lay it up against me. He accepts the situation, and, though he insists the women don't want the vote, he is going to see that they use it—right.

"My wife says she won't vote; my mother says she won't vote," he informed me. He pondered a moment with knitted brows. "But I've got to get them out," he said. "Got to get the women out." Persons who know him well say that mother and wife will not refuse to vote for him. "They'll do anything for Al," say those who know him.

Mr. Smith says that down in the old First, where he has lived all his life and his parents before him—"Why, my mother can go right to the spot where she used to haul water up out of the neighborhood



STATE SENATOR ROBERT F. WAGNER.

well," he told me—he says the women of the First didn't want the vote.

"Women in New York have been better treated without the vote than the men were treated," he insisted. "We gave them the dower right, we gave them many things because of the feeling that they hadn't the vote and therefore must be treated extra fair."

"Now, I'm not going to be drawn into a discussion of this thing," he added, perceiving indications on my part of saying things. "And women have got the vote and we're going to take them right in. They've always been in, for that matter."

"Down in my district I've always had as much to do with women wanting things as with men. Women have always been interested in the way matters were run down there."

"Then why—I?" I began.

But Mr. Smith, as a concession to the new voter before him, embarked on an explanation of Tammany and what a shame it was that so many people had an idea it was the expectation of jobs that made so many vote the Democratic ticket in this town, when as a matter of fact the new administration had comparatively few jobs to hand out.

Come Around Thursday.

"Come around Thursday afternoon," he concluded. "There's a committee of three, of which I happen to be chairman, that's going to meet that day to decide just how to fit women in the political organization." But it isn't yet Thursday at the date of this writing, so I cannot report on that conference.

Thomas F. Foley, who consistently opposed woman suffrage up to the time it became a fact in New York, is, as most folks know, leader in the First Assembly district. I called him up this week to ask what arrangements had been made about the new voters at the Democratic clubhouse at 59 Madison street. His voice came resignedly over the wire, as of one who admitted his chastisement.

"Oh yes," he said, "the women are here, they are voters, and they will have the use of the clubhouse the same as the men. So far no arrangements have been made for their meeting on separate nights. They are quite free to come in any time. It is their clubhouse as much as it is the men's."

And to think that it was Mr. Foley who told me, three days before that momentous November 6, 1917, that women should never, no never, be admitted to the nice comfortable Democratic clubhouse at 59 Madison street!

Phonographic Memory

PERSONS who buy phonograph records probably have noticed that most of the dealers possess the faculty of remembering the numbers and do not have to refer to the catalogs when a record is asked for by the title and not the number. It's all a matter of practice, according to a Chambers street dealer, who said:

"It's all in the day's work. You see, remembering the numbers of records is just about the same as remembering telephone numbers. Some are good at it and some are bad, but the average dealer in records usually has the numbers of the records at his finger tip."